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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the application of notional syllabuses and structural curricula to intensive ESL programs. It is suggested that a communicative or functional or functional-notional syllabus must not be viewed in contrast to a structural or grammatical syllabus. Functional notions are necessary inclusions into the class and into texts, but language cannot and does not function independently of structure. In reviewing the functional-notional approach and speech act theory, an application of functional notions to ESL instruction is discussed using a currently available ESL textbook. This application includes the revision of pattern drills to include extending the situation of the drill to the classroom itself, involving the students in role-playing, and incorporating alternate linguistic and nonverbal devices. Among the class assignments discussed is the selection of communicative language functions common to all language usage and their subsequent classification into type of illocutionary act. Both this assignment and others mentioned aim to inform the students that language is a functional tool. However, ideas cannot function to inform, instruct, request, etc. until they are set in some linguistic form. (JK)

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How to Make Functional-Notional Notions Function with a Standard American ESL Text

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[Paper delivered at the Third Annual Summer Meeting,
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL),
Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, July 25, 1981.

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INTRODUCTION

In the time allotted to me here today I am going to tell you everything you need to know and answer all the questions that need to be asked about how to teach English as a second language and, in line with the cosponsorship of the TESOL summer institute, show how how the same things hold true for teaching foreign languages generally. Yes, sure I am. If I thought I could do that, I would invent a catchy label, register it as a trademark, put in in my title along with the required R with a little circle around it, and eventually, hopefully, make a lot of money manufacturing gimmickry and textbooks.

No, my aim here today is much more modest, and I have tried to summarize my intent with my title, which, as a practicing linguist, I could not avoid making into a play on words. Let's look at my title as a basis for understanding what I intend to do today.

Although my title does not have any registered trademarks in it, it does contain a compound adjective, functional-notional, which has come to be considered by some a codeword for a certain approach to language instruction, even a pedagogic method, or syllabus, as some people seem to prefer to call it. I am not taking sides in any debate between the merits of synthetic vs. analytic approaches or structural vs. communicative curricula. I am simply going to report on my application to an intensive ESL program of some of the notions about linguistic communication that I have been able to draw mostly from my reading of the philsophy of language. As an inveterate non-professional philosopher myself, I have drawn conclusions from my experiences and will spell out some general suggestions at the end of my presentation.

NOTIONAL, FUNCTIONAL, FUNCTIONAL-NOTIONAL, or NOTIONAL-FUNCTIONAL?

Notional notions in the business of English study and teaching did not begin with David Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses, although this self-proclaimed modest work, at least from the impressions I have gained from reading and listening to current discussions, seems to have had a seminal influence not entirely unlike the early influence of the course lecture notes which Noam Chomsky published as Syntactic Structures. That is to say, Wilkins' papers and lectures and slim volume are taken and applied and latched on to and reworked by many different people in the business of teaching foreign languages, or at least in the business of teaching how to teach foreign languages. One of the earliest, best discussions of notional categories in systematic grammar is to be found in Otto Jespersen's The Philosophy of Grammar. Wilkins relies

in large part in his little volume on the work of philosophers of language, many associated with Oxford University, most notably and directly, the work of John L. Austin. I would like to make a brief excursion into the work of some of these philosophers and take as my starting point a part of Wilkins' (1976) Notional Syllabuses, chapter 2, "Categories for a Notional Syllabus," pp. 21-54, which Wilkins calls, "the major part of this study" and which "is devoted to the exposition and exemplification of a framework which could be used in the setting-up of a notional syllabus." (p. 20)

Wilkins divides his notional categories into three main types of meaning, (1) semantico-grammatical, (2) modality, and (3) communicative function. Semantico-grammatical categories are ideational, cognitive, propositional, and have to do with the meaning of objectifiable reality, such as the categories of space, time, quantity, logical relations, etc., as expressed by language. These notions are associated in the philosophy of language with names like the early Wittgenstein, Russell, Carnap, Quine, and Davidson. The notions stem from an attempt to account for how words fit the world.

The second category defined by Wilkins, modal meaning, has more to do with the point of view of the speaker of an utterance and includes the general categories of certainty and commitment.

The third category of notions, communicative function, has more to do with the use to which the speaker of an utterance intends to put that utterance, i.e. what he is trying to accomplish by saying what he does say. Major functional categories, according to Wilkins, are judgment and evaluation, suasion, argument, rational enquiry and exposition, personal emotions, and emotional relations. It is in this category of functional notions that Wilkins is dependent on Austin and other Oxford-related philosophers, notably the American, John Searle.

A notional syllabus, according to Wilkins, tries to make use of each of the areas of meaning in an attempt to put language instruction in the most meaningful context of use. If this is true, then a method which dealt primarily with semantico-grammatical categories, or, conversely, only functional categories, would somehow be presenting an incomplete view of the notions of language. Nobody to my knowledge has proposed a modality syllabus, although there is much discussion of the efficacy of structural vis-a-vis communicative approaches.

As an example of an analysis of the three types of meaning in Wilkins' notions, I offer the sentence,

Can you hand me that hammer over there?

From a semantico-grammatical standpoint, this sentence is an interrogative and includes indication of space, "over there," persons, "you," "me," and an object, "hammer," all centralized around a predication of the movement of the inanimate object from one person to another. Modality, as indicated here by the modal auxiliary, and perhaps the interrogative form, might indicate a lack of certainty. However, from a functional standpoint, this sentence can be interpreted as a polite way of making a request for someone to do something for you.

For his functional categories, Wilkins relies heavily on Austin's notion of performative verbs, i.e. verbs that say what it is the person is doing when he uses them, e.g. the sentence above could be restated as "I request you to hand me that hammer over there," in which the performative verb, "request," states what the person is intending to accomplish by uttering the statement. Wilkins presents rather a large taxonomy of verbs under each of his six major functional categories.

Functional taxonomies are rather well developed in the literature of the philosophy of language. Two of the better known in the American literature are credited to John Searle, a student of Austin's. In his first version he has eight major categories, which he has revised to five in his second version. Either list and its accompanying discussion are valuable supplements to Wilkins' discussion.

In his earlier version Searle (1969) lists and analyzes the types of functions of language accomplished by speech acts as request, assertion, question, thanking, advising, warning, greeting, congratulating, and promising. Searle maintains that any speech act can be categorized as a specific type on the basis of its propositional content along with the preparatory conditions surrounding its use. Searle's analysis also explains what each speech act essentially counts as in the system of communication.

For example, a request, according to Searle, has the propositional content of a future act of the hearer, the person to whom the speech act is addressed. The preparatory conditions include the speaker's belief that the hearer is able to perform the act. Also preparatory to this speech act is the assumption by the speaker that the hearer will not perform the requested act without being asked to do so. The sincerity condition requires that the speaker wants the hearer to do the requested act. A request counts essentially as an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do the act of the proposition.

Under Searle's earlier analysis a question can have any propositional content. Preparatory conditions include the fact that the speaker wants to know the information and that the hearer will not obviously provide the information without being asked. The sincerity condition requires that the speaker wants to know the information. The speech act counts essentially as an attempt by the speaker to elicit information from the hearer.

Similarities between these two types of acts and other considerations led Searle (1975) to a revision of his taxonomy into the categories of assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. These five categories are established on the basis that they respectively represent the notions of (1) telling people how things are in the world, (2) trying to get people to do things, (3) committing oneself to doing things, (4) expressing one's feelings, and (5) bringing about changes in the world through the utterance. (See Katz, 1977, 197.) This is an attempt by Searle to make his classification more systematic, and the five major categories include various subtypes, many of which are statable with a performative verb. Searle also has recognized the indirectness of much communication, so that the hammer-sentence above may be classifiable as a question for information by form, but it is also easy to recognize its use as that of a request for action. Of course, in his new taxonomy, questions and requests are lumped together, in that they are both attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something, either a physically observable action, as the response to the request, or the more mental action lying behind the process of providing information in answering a question. Over and above this reclassification lies some other process of mental calculation or processing that allows the speaker to get his message across to the hearer by various direct and indirect means.

In a much more recent work, Bach and Harnish (1979) make explicit and systematic the mental processing that must somehow take place in the use and identification of speech acts for the purposes of linguistic communication. They provide a taxonomy, which is much like Searle's later one, and put it to work

inside a speech act schema. Their basic contention is that a hearer makes inferences about any speech act on the basis of mutual contextual beliefs shared by the speaker and the hearer. In addition, underlying successful communication are a linguistic presumption -- that the members of a speech community share the language and an understanding of the conceptual meaning of the language -- and a communicative presumption -- that whenever a speaker says something in the language to another member of the community, he is doing so with a recognizable communicative intent.

In their Speech Act Schema, Bach and Harnish (1979, chapters 1 and 2) recognize four levels of understanding that must go on for communication to take place:

> L1 is the level at which the hearer recognizes that the speaker is uttering an expression and does so solely on the basis that he hears the speaker utter it.
> L2 is the level at which the hearer understands what the speaker means, in the sense of signifying, by uttering the words. This inference is made by the hearer on the basis of L1 and the linguistic presumption along with the Mutual Contextual Belief.
> L3 is the level at which the hearer decides what the speaker is saying, that is, he makes a clear recognition of the operative meaning of level 2 into a functional meaning.
> L4 is the level at which the hearer decides that, if speaking literally, the speaker is trying to accomplish one of the specific possible functions of communication.

To compare this system to Wilkins' notions, one would have to say that Wilkins presumes level 1, although much of the early business of foreign language teaching has to do with getting students to recognize utterances from a physical standpoint. Level 2 has to do with semantico-grammatical notions, but then so does level 3 with its referential and time-specifying functions. Wilkins' functional notions fit most completely level 4, but L4 is reached only as a result of a complex process that takes the physical side of speech through a set of semantic inferences involving identification of sense and reference into an understanding as a simple act that sttempts to do something communicative, all underlain by linguistic and communicative presumptions and mutual contextual beliefs.

Where do we begin as language teachers to bring our students to this level so that they can function well with our language? I am not sure where we begin to accomplish all that, but, the fact is, I do not think we have to begin to teach everything that is necessary for establishing communicative competence -- whatever that is -- in our students.

In my past attempts to incorporate some of the notions I have only been able to touch on here briefly into my own teaching of English as a second language, I feel I have discovered that adult language learners at some level, perhaps far removed from consciousness, have an understanding of the various aspects of communicative competence. This is merely a conjecture of mine, and I have not had the chance to test it very thoroughly, nor can I imagine how I would set up tests which could very easily give me objectifiable results. Perhaps it is because I am a human teaching a very human thing to other humans that it is difficult for me to get outside the humanness of it. So let me tell you what I did and what I think, and then you may be able to help me make some other sense of it all.

APPLICATION OF FUNCTIONAL NOTIONS

I wish now to tell you of my experiences in attempting to apply some of these functional notions to ESL instruction using a currently available standard ESL textbook.

I have been teaching in a proprietary school for about nineteen months now. A proprietary school is in the business to make money. My school teaches courses in medical assistance and medical lab technology, business skills, typing, etc., and court reporting in addition to English as a second language. ESL has been rather successful in attracting paying students from Latin America and the Middle East, may of whom are looking toward transferring to community colleges and/or universities in the United States. Some, however, are in school only for the purposes of maintaining an I-20 or student visa allowing them to stay in the country. More recently we have attracted a large contingency of Southeast Asian refugees, whose schooling in English is paid in part by the federal government through Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) and in part by county government welfare payments.

We have had on the teaching staff at my school from four to seven ESL instructors, who have conducted classes ranging in size from eight to twenty-nine. Most recently, the classes have been in the twenty to twenty-five student range.

The school spends very little on supplies, resources, teachers' salaries, or administrative support. The administrative staff does not like to stock a lot of different books to sell to the students, and the admissions people, really the sales staff, does not want to talk about too complicated a program in the ESL division. As a result, there is little chance of an individual instructor being able to effect a change in the basic program or to select a text for purchase and use generally by the students except for the basic text. Also individual instructors have a range of twenty to thirty-five class hours per week -- fewer than twenty-two hours is considered part-time; the part-timers often have other positions also -- leaving little time for reflection and consideration. It is much easier for the individual instructor to get on with the program as already set up than to bring about fundamental changes.

The program <u>is</u> set up to use one of the ESL textbook series that has six books. Thus our program has six levels, known as book one, book two, book three, book four, book five, and book six, respectively. Students are placed initially on the basis of a very general placement test but can be moved ahead quite easily on the recommendation of a teacher. Students sign a three, six, or twelve month contract based on their initial placement. Classes for non-refugee students run three hours a day, five days a week to meet visa requirements. Classes for refugee students run twenty hours to meet funding agency requirements.

The textbook series used in my school is <u>New English 900</u> (New York: Collier Macmillan). It consists of fifty units that each contain contextualized dialogues or short readings, substitution drills, exercises, and workbook supplementary material. This is not the place to review the strengths and/or weaknesses of this particular text nor to show where it fits on a scale from structural to communicative or any such rating. The facts are that this textbook series abounds in many copies at the school where I teach, and I and my colleagues have to do our professional work on its basis. [If there is one thing I have learned in my years of university teaching and now in a proprietary school, it is that students expect to have a given text., i.e. a required text.]

I have tried several things with this text and with material to supplement the text. I have taught at all levels, one through six, and have found that I can get students to learn English using it but believe I could do so with any text.

This past spring, April to be exact, I was given the assignment of conducting a class at the book six level. Some of the students in the class had been at my school for some time, progressing through the levels and already having completed book six. They, however, were not yet ready to leave the school because of contractual and/or visa requirements. They had agreed to repeat book six with me after having completed it with another teacher. Others in the class were newly arrived at the school, but the admissions screening showed they were above the level of any other class then going on at the school. [Proprietary schools find it hard to turn away students with money in hand. Many class shifts take place to accommodate the students on hand.] All of my students in this class were what we call "privates," that is, those whose money comes from somewhere other than governmental funding.

This particular class was one of the smallest ones ever in the ESL program at this school in the time I have been there. It only had nine. Among these nine were one female and eight male students. One student was about forty-five years old; the others were in their late teens or early twenties. Two students were from Venezuela, one from Colombia, one from Brazil, one from Tanzania, one from Egypt, two from Lebanon, and one was from Iran, a member of the Armenian Christian minority in that country.

I had decided that I could not simply follow the program of the textbook since five of the nine had just completed it with another teacher. However, I felt I must somehow base my instruction on the material there in the text. As a result, I decided to attempt to introduce some functional notions directly into the text as it existed. I felt I could do this most easily because of my understanding of the philsophical literature on speech acts. [I had published one journal article and presented a conference paper applying speech act theory to a problem in library communication, see Eichman 1979, 1980.] and also because these students, or at least most of them, were supposed to have been brought by all the major structures in English already in our program.

The opportunity to introduce explicitly some functional notions came as the result of my attempts to make real to the students a structural drill in the first unit of Book 6, New English 900. The series is set up to include in each unit two or three sets of introductory situationalized dialogues as parts of a continuing story with a continuing cast of characters who are very familiar to users of the series who have passed through earlier books. Following each dialogue is a set of substitution drills working on the several structural points of the dialogue and adding vocabulary items beyond those in the dialogue. After the sub drills come exercises that require some manipulation of the structure on the basis of instructions and cued items.

On page eleven of Book 6 are three substitution drills working on the forms had better, 'd better, and 'd better not. The first exercise on page twelve extends use of these forms by means of instructions to "give advice" in a series of simple situations described by one sentence each followed by a cued subject pronoun and verb phrase. The student is to join subject and predicate by means of the construction had better or had better not, resulting in the giving of advice to the person described in the situational sentence, e.g.:

Examples: 1. Miguel hasn't slept well all week. (he/try to get some rest)
He'd better try to get some rest.
2. The sky is gray and cloudy. (you/not forget your umbrella.)
You'd better not forget your umbrella.

After reading through and discussing the substitution drills--by the time they get to Book 6, students, and their teachers, often find straightforward pattern drilling boring and/or pointless--we proceeded to the exercise to perform the simple situational advice-giving. However, in addition to following the suggested instructions, I elicited from the students the fact that they knew other ways to give the same advice, e.g. should as an alternate to had better. We then practiced those other ways with each of the situations. We also discussed the fact that these situations were all predictive, i.e. non-past and non-present time specifications, where all the advice is about future possible actions of the advisee. This led us to the workbook, page twelve, where retroflective advice is given in the form of shouldn't have, incorporating the advisory modal with the perfect. This workbook exercise gives the directions to "question" some statements, e.g. 1. I'm surprised that you brought some cake. with Why? Shouldn't I have brought cake?, which amounts to a simple dialogue where both partners reflect on the approriateness of some past action of the one. This exercise as stands seemed rather limited in applicability, but it provided the basis for using the suggested situations to embed the shouldn't have into statements of opinion and/or advice, e.g. "I don't think you should have brought a cake." and "I think he should have asked her."

My next step was to gather various forms for giving advice and summarize them on a handout. I was able to do so and prepared a dittoed handout during the next class break. The information on my handout was essentially as follows:

GIVING ADVICE
1. Modal constructions (usually with friends and acquaintances)
A. You should VERB PHRASE
ought to
had better
2. Attitudinal verbs (usually more formal)
B. I advise you to VERB PHRASE
C. I recommend that you VERB PHRASE
D. I suggest that you VERB PHRASE
3. Other forms (milder suggestions)
E. If I were you, I would VERB PHRASE
F. You could VERB PHRASE
G. You can VERB PHRASE
H. You might VERB PHRASE
I. Why don't you VERB PHRASE

This handout led into some discussion of the role of the modals and their combination with perfects to indicate past time, structural points covered elsewhere in the book, which some of the students had worked on before.

As a wrap-up to this day's three hours of class, I had the students engage in a little role-play in extended situations. First, I presented a more formal, public situation in which one of the students was to be a clerk in a department store and another student was to ask for help in selecting a wristwatch for purchase. This situation also called attention to the opening or ice-breaking and closure parts of a dialogue in addition to the meat of the matter, advice-giving in a formal situation. A second role-play was not really a role-play, in that

I took advantage of a request from one of the students to me for information about how to go about getting a state driver's lecense. I turned the problem over to the class, several of whom had either already obtained a local license or had looked into the procedure. This situation involved more than advice, strictly speaking, since there were requirements that were absolutely necessary or "musts", allowing work with other modals and with the contrast between must and should, etc. But there was also much room for advice-giving about preparing for and taking the required examinations. The situation also allowed practice in the less formal forms of advice-giving, since these students knew each other and considered themselves peers in a non-public situation.

At the end of the class I summarized the day's work by pointing out the various forms advice could take and the difference in appropriateness according to the relationship of the people involved. I also called attention to the similarity in form of some types of advice-giving to those of opinion-stating, making on the blackboard another chart on opinion-stating analogous to my dittoed handout on advice-giving. This also drew attention to the possibility of confusion in situations where it is not so clear whether a person is giving advice or stating an opinion. I suggested that the students might want to think again about the relationships of persons when making such determinations, i.e. authority figures and close friends or relatives can sometimes get away with straightforward advice whereas other relationships often call for more cloaked opinion-stating.

As a homework assignment I asked the class to think of all the things one could do with language besides giving advice and stating opinions. They were not necessarily supposed to think about English or their own language specifically but about communication in general. When they returned the next day, I was pleasantly surprised with the results. Every student had worked on the assignment, and we had a fruitful discussion of the ideas as a class. The students together came up with eighteen functions, which I have arranged in the following list according to order of discussion in class. In each case I have labeled the function with a performative verb of my choosing. The discussion did not usually include this or other labels but centered on who was doing what to whom through language, situational reports of speech acts:

1. ADVISE
2. ASSERT (OPINIONS)
3. DECLARE INTENTIONS
4. NEGOTIATE
5. PERSUADE--ASSENT
6. ADVERTISE
7. ENTERTAIN (LITERATURE, ETC.)
8. REQUEST (ASK FOR)
9. INFORM (GIVE INFORMATION)
10. GREET (VOCATIVES, INTRODUCE)
11. INSTRUCT (PROFESSIONAL SITUATIONS, NURSE, ETC.)
12. WARN
13. THANKS--CONGRATULATE
14. LIE--DECEIVE
15. COMMAND--ORDER
16. CONDOLANCES--SYMPATHY
17. RELIGIOUS CEREMONY (PRAYER, SCRIPTURE, ETC.)
18. THREATEN

In addition, the class decided there were underlying assumptions, a. that two people were cooperating, and b. that they shared the language, understood each other, and took turns speaking for most, though perhaps not all of the functions.

These eighteen functions are not necessarily a complete list and do, as seem all such lists, contain some overlap in the functions. Rearranging the class's list according to the taxonomy of Bach and Harnish (1979, 41), I came up with the following classifications:

Communicative Illocutionary Acts

I. Constatives	II. Directives	II. Commissives	IV. Acknowledgements
2. ASSERT	1. ADVISE	3. DECLARE INTENTIONS	10. GREET
3. DECLARE INTENTIONS	4. NEGOTIATE	4. NEGOTIATE	13. THANKS--CONGRATULATE
4. NEGOTIATE	5. PERSUADE	5. ASSENT	16. CONDOLANCES--SYMPATHY
7. ENTERTAIN	8. REQUEST	18. THREATEN	
9. INFORM	11. INSTRUCT		
11. INSTRUCT	12. WARN		
12. WARN	14. LIE-DECEIVE		
14. LIE-DECEIVE	15. COMMAND-ORDER		
	18. THREATEN		

Conventional Illocutionary Acts

17. RELIGIOUS CEREMONY

It is obvious to me that some of the functions that the class came up with are complex speech actions, a series of speech acts connected by the point or points of the discourse, e.g. NEGOTIATE, which is highly complex in structure. However, it also seems pointless to break such functions down into smaller units for a classification for a language learning class, except perhaps to take a further step in teaching strategies of NEGOTIATION, etc. [See Eichman, 1980, for a discussion of the inadequacy of speech act taxonomies for a description of dynamic speech action and a suggestion of another model for such situations.]

The greatest value in this homework assignment and the subsequent class discussion seemed to me to lie in the attention it drew to the overall fact that language, whatever language, was a functional tool. Although these students functioned fully with their own language and also functioned somewhat with English, the conscious awareness of the functions of language seemed to do as much for the class as did the actual forms and/or functions discussed. It also allowed me, the teacher, to draw more attention to various interpersonal and contextual elements of subsequent situational dialogues in the book.

The next dialogue we took up, pages sixteen and seventeen of Book 6, involved a discussion between a young child and his mother about the details of a forthcoming birthday party for the youngster. It consists mainly of a series of questions from the child and answers from the mother. The main structural point of the dialogue is the use of the passive in the present perfect tense, with modals, and in the present continuous. On the surface, this dialogue could appear to be the passing back and forth of information, but underlying the situation is a dissatisfaction on the part of the child with the progress of the invitations for the party. The child keeps introducing topics for discussion that had been talked about before. His tactics can be viewed as an attempt to influence his parents in the arrangements for the party. At the end of the dialogue, the child leaves the house, ostensibly to play outside.

In looking carefully at this dialogue, my students were quick to pick up on the larger functions of the discourse beyond the seemingly simple exchange of information. They also quickly realized the role of the mother and its influence on the way the woman spoke to the child, especially in the area of advice-giving,

where the mother used very direct imperatives in telling her son what was best to do.

A follow-up dialogue, pages twenty-four and twenty-five, had the mother telephoning her husband at the office because the son had not returned in the time she had advised him to. In this dialogue between husband and wife, the students were quick to notice the difference in tone on the part of the woman in her role as wife vis-a-vis her role as mother in the previous dialogue. It was in this dialogue that the structural point of combining modals with the perfect to get retroflective statements was introduced, the mother imagining what might have happened, what she should have done, and finally what must have happened when she espies the son returning with one of the previously uninvited guests.

I next had the students return to the first two dialogues in the book, pages one and two and eight and nine, which were the basis for the advice-giving structural exercise from which I started my excursion with the class into functional analysis. These dialogues were set in an airport, where a young woman is seeing off a departing boyfriend. They are subsequently joined by two other friends, one a peer and the other the peer's mother. These various relationships allowed for some different forms of advice to the departee, including some more intimate conversation between the boyfriend and girlfriend about the possibilities of their future. The dialogue ends with an airport official giving official advice or warning about who may enter the boarding area of the airport, another different form than we had practiced before. My point again in reanalyzing the dialogue was to call attention to the roles and linguistic forms and the functions they performed.

As the last exercise specifically concerned with advice-giving, we turned to page seven of the workbook, where the situation is set up that a friend wishing to travel abroad asks the student for help. The student is directed to give suggestions to the student about applying for a passport, etc., in a list of ten items, using the form, You had better, with each of them. Instead of simply following this exercise as in the book, I had the students play the roles, first of a friend asking about going to the United States, allowing the students to supplement the supplied list of suggestions with those based on their own experiences, and secondly to play the part of a government official in their own country advising an inquirer about the necessary and important procedures in traveling, again having the students supply information from their own experience in obtaining a passport and visa to come to the United States.

As a result of all this resnaping of the material that existed in portions of New English 900, I came to the conclusion that a series of well thought-out dialogues, as I think those in this series are, would allow a teacher who was aware of an analysis of the functioning of language to do a lot with the text without having to come up with all the examples and ideas alone. Furthermore, the structural drills, and especially the situanalized structural exercises, can be the basis of a lot of creative linguistic practice, if the teacher builds on their basis with analogous situations with which he/she is familiar as a native speaker.

CONCLUSIONS

So, what did I accomplish in my class experiment? Well, I took a few functional notions, not all functional notions, and made them mean a great deal to my students, or at least the students' responses made me think so. I did not impose a functional and/or notional syllabus, whatever that may be, on a situa-

tional-structural textbook, if that is what New English 900 is. I only tried to make some ideas about linguistic communication work in my teaching of English, and I learned something about my students.

I still think the teacher is the most important element in the classroom. If making a notional syllabus means what I always understood by the word syllabus, then I am all for it. That is, I am for the teacher designing the whole scope of what happens in the classroom with some major goal in mind. A syllabus, in this notion, includes 1. selecting a textbook, 2. arranging for class work, 3. arranging for assignments as homework, and 4. checking up on progress through exams, etc. But a syllabus is a teacher's plan for a course. Now if syllabus means the one way to teach and the one method to use in writing a textbook, then I do not want one. The one way attitude makes students into machines, into which teachers, as machine operators, feed input to get certain output. I am neither a teaching machine nor a machine operator.

Now I would like to make some conjectures based on my experiences in this functional-notional experiment in the classroom. First, is communicative competence language specific? I am not sure what communicative competence exactly means. Certainly we can talk of competent speakers, effective teachers, functional speakers. But I believe, over and above the specific languages there stands a basic human understanding of communication and its functions that is often lost sight of in attempts to provide specific means to teach specific functions in specific languages in specific settings. [For a somewhat similar conclusion based on examining varieties of speech activities, see Levinson, 1979, 394.] What can we as teachers do to make use of this basic competence? I do not know, except, perhaps, to remain human at all times and attempt at all times to communicate to the other humans in the classroom, the students, at all levels. Language teachers deal with the most human of all activities, language. That may be a platitude, but at least it is not a Panacea ®.

Secondly, it is important to draw attention to modality features of linguistic form, e.g. time as related to tense and aspect, modal verbs for predictive future and/or polite forms, performative verbs as formal indicators of function, especially useable in formal situations.

Third, sociolinguistics, in all its obviousness, obviously has contributions to make. I think Bach and Harnish (1979) state fairly well the linguistic communication situation with their discussion of mutual contextual beliefs. From my experiences in the classroom, there seem to be the categories, formal-informal-familiar, polite-impolite, and perhaps ±intimate [or maybe ±episodic, as in Di Pietro, 1981]. However, these categories are not necessarily exclusive.

Fourth, conversational principles, e.g. topic-raising, turn-taking, perhaps mind-engaging [See Eichman, 1980], override and guide the discrete functional notions. How do we get these into classroom work? Perhaps only by providing examples, as in the situational dialogues, or perhaps in carefully chosen pieces of literature containing dialogues.

Finally, another platitude, perhaps, in that speech act taxonomies may fail to be absolute, but looking carefully at them and, especially, introspecting about all the ways one may accomplish a certain function [as did Wilkins, 1976, 59, to produce various forms for seeking permission in application of a notional syllabus to global course design] may be a very fruitful way for any teacher to prepare for teaching a certain form and/or function. If such an exercise does nothing else, it should prevent the teacher from thinking this is the way or this is the form.

As my absolutely final conclusion, I must assert again that there can be no such thing as a communicative or functional or functional-notional syllabus that is in contrast to a structural or grammatical syllabus. We can introduce functional notions into the class and into texts, but language does not function independent of structure. You can have all the ideas you want to express, but until you know some form, you cannot make your notions function.

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